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File: SAFE

ODP 0-406
2 April 1980

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

FROM: Bruce T. Johnson
Director of Data Processing

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SUBJECT: Meeting With DCI's Science and Technology Advisory
Panel (STAP) on 1 April 1980

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1. On 1 April Clare Rice, [] and I met with two members of the DCI's Science and Technology Advisory Panel (STAP), [] Chairman, and []. Also present were [], an ex-employee who serves as Secretary to the STAP, [] who, as Chairman of the Director's Science and Technology Intelligence Committee, provides staff support to the STAP, and [] of OCR. Bruce Clarke was also present to open the meeting but had to leave almost immediately to attend a meeting with the DCI.

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2. [] opening comments included assurances that the STAP's desire is to be helpful to NFAC and ODP in bringing an effective SAFE system into being. He said they had gotten involved about a year ago at [] request and he mentioned their recent reviews of Interim SAFE and their discussions with the users of that system. They have also discussed SAFE and its Community implications with representatives of AMS.

3. At Clare Rice's urging, the discussion dwelt initially on the implications in STAP's comments to the Director that an inadequate job had been done of collecting and validating user requirements for SAFE services. It became apparent that the Panel members were not being critical of the work that has been done but rather wish to focus on the fact that the system, once initiated, will inevitably change and the requirements to be met by the system will also change. They seem convinced that it is both necessary and possible by systematic investigation at this stage to

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anticipate what those changes might be. They were highly critical of the prime contractor for failing to establish some form of human factors test facilities which would experiment not only with the human factors of computer terminal usage but, more importantly, investigate the ways in which the SAFE services may (they would say will) change the very nature of the analytical process.

STATINTL 4. This led in turn to a discussion of what I believe to be the main thrust of the STAP concern. They are not convinced that the [] design is flexible enough to insure adaptability in the future. As we talked it became apparent that they were really challenging the nature of the approach CIA has taken, that is, they were objecting to the establishment of a large system architecture to be designed from the ground up and delivered for our use. They strongly urged the development of a pilot system of perhaps ten to thirty terminals before making a major investment in the development of an IOC system serving [] terminals. I could not and did not resist the temptation to point out that the incremental approach which they were suggesting had been originally proposed by NFAC and ODP, but rejected by Agency management in favor of a design competition leading to the architectural approach being followed by []. They were aware of this early history, but as we talked it was apparent that particularly [] was of the opinion that the best thing we could do at this time was to abandon the contractual work done to date, return to Interim SAFE, invest about \$1 million in adapting it so that it becomes a model of the desired system, and modify the contract with [] so as to make it merely a services contract in which they provide the supporting and programming services needed as we progress with the project. (How we could meet our obligations to DIA under such a procedure was not addressed.) [] at one point, in response to a comment about the delay that this would entail, asserted flatly that in his estimation [] would miss delivery of the IOC system by at least 18 months, implying that we would be better advised to use that 18 month period to redirect the project as he was suggesting.

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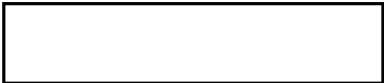
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5. Among other things discussed were the desirability of looking closely at the largest computer network currently in existence, the IBM net, and at the "6 or 7" large scale electronic mail systems currently in existence, in order to see what models they might provide for SAFE.

6. On a number of other points having to do with the nature of the requirement, documentation and the written specifications for the system, we were able to clear up a number of misunderstandings and indeed there was considerable agreement on a number of peripheral points which need not be discussed here. There was also agreement, as already noted, that our requirements investigation efforts and terminal operational laboratory experiments had been excellent as far as they had gone, but the STAP would have us take them several steps further. All of the agreement, however, did nothing to eliminate the fundamental differences represented by the STAP conclusion that we are going about the project in the wrong way.

7. Some of their opinions are apparently outlined in an option paper which they have drafted for the Director. They want very much to have that option paper reviewed by those concerned before it is put in the final form. To this end copies of the paper are to be delivered to Clare Rice and me on Thursday, 3 April. We have committed ourselves to react to the paper prior to the scheduled meeting with the Director on 10 April. In turn, members of the STAP will provide us with comments on the paper recently submitted to the Director in which we provide answers to the questions raised by the STAP in their memorandum of 18 March 1980.

8. I will defer comment on the organizational and contractual ramifications of the STAP position until I have had time to review their option paper.


Bruce T. Johnson

cc: DDA
D/OCR
C/SPS/ODP

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